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People's Reporter

A FORUM OF CURRENT AFFAIRS

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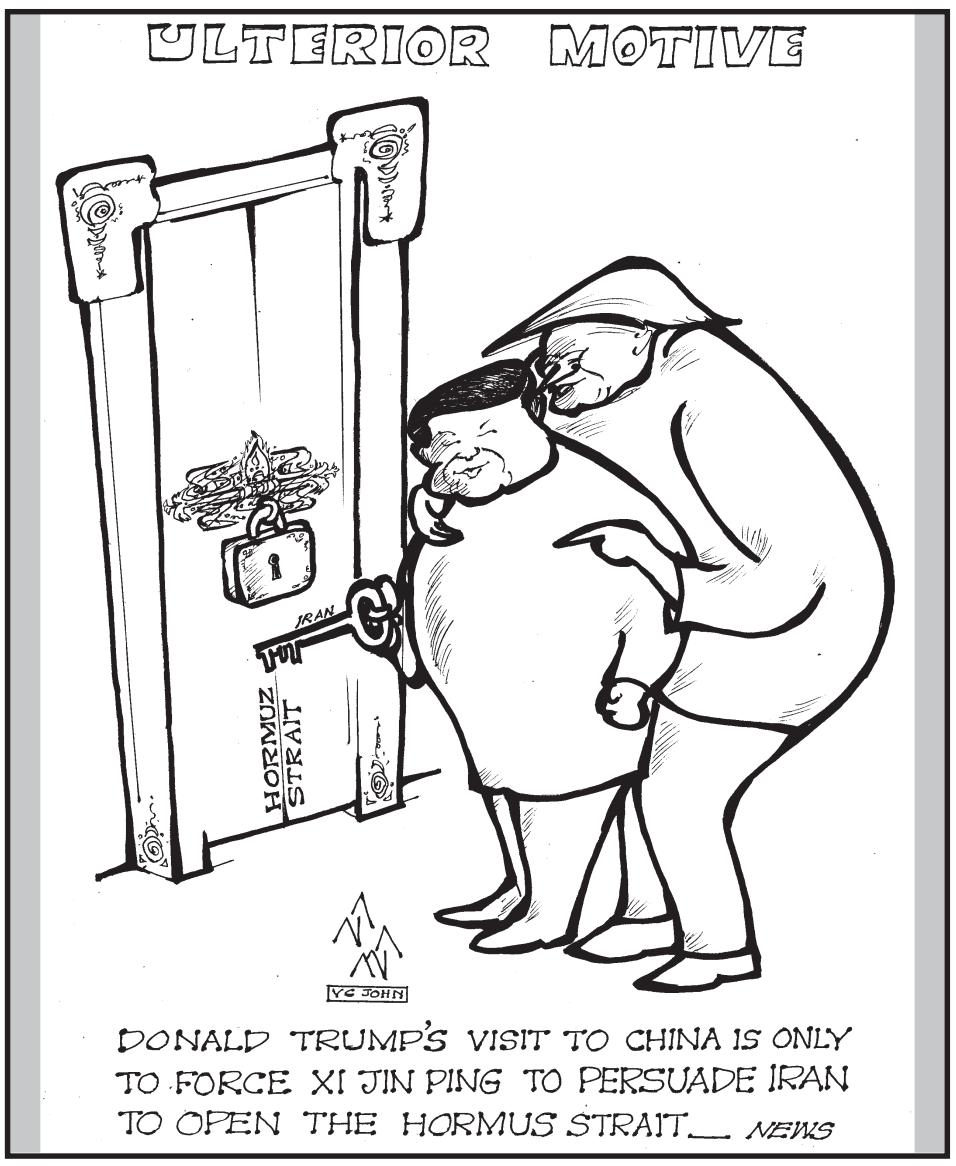
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DONALD TRUMP'S VISIT TO CHINA IS ONLY TO FORCE XI JIN PING TO PERSUADE IRAN TO OPEN THE HORMUS STRAIT__ NEWS

70th Anniversary of the CISRS

A Strategic Reorientation on the Horizon

Y. T. Vinayaraj

As the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society (CISRS) marks its 70th Anniversary, it is an occasion not only to celebrate its history but also to reflect on its transformative journey of Christian public witness.

Established in 1957 as a research and study wing of Indian churches, the CISRS has been a beacon of faith and social engagement in South Asia over the past seven decades. This significant milestone invites us to honour the visionary founders who laid the groundwork, the various leaders who have guided its mission through the years, and the dedicated individuals who continue to uphold the Institute's life and witness in an increasingly complex and challenging world. Celebrating this 70th year is also a deep moment of reflection, renewal, and reorientation in our commitment to faith-based social engagement.

The origins of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society (CISRS) began during key moments in Indian Christianity, particularly at the Tambaram Missionary Conference in 1938. This conference led to important discussions

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World Council of Churches

Pentecost Message 2026

"The Holy Spirit Invites Reimagined Communities of Unity"

"Regardless of the season, place or circumstances, we are called to be agents of new and renewed Spirit-filled communities that show love, envision and practice shalom, promote and engage food security, care for creation and seek justice not only within our faith communities but outside of them. The Holy Spirit invites us to new things, possibilities, and hope and brings us into communities where justice, peace, and love abound."

The WCC presidents have published a Pentecost message entitled "The Holy Spirit Invites Reimagined Communities of Unity." The message reminds us that we are called to life together.

Pentecost Message 2026

"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place… All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them ability…They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common." Acts 2:1,4 and Acts 2:42-44

Pentecost invites us to reimagine communities that care for and share what we have in common. In a world divided by war, hunger, poverty, violence, injustice, and ecological disasters, Pentecost reminds us that we are called to life together. Acts 2 says they were gathered in one place where they were "filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles" that served as indicators of a renewed community in Christ.

Their coming together was not just one homogenous group but was representative of a grand host of people from many places, customs and ideas breaking bread together and sharing what they had in common. This is a lesson for us today. Despite the troubled season of their time, they accepted the invitation to come together and modelled a new way of sharing common life in Christ with the gift of the Holy Spirit at the center.

Each of us is left to ask what this means in our season of troubled times. Regardless of the season, place or circumstances we are called to be agents of new and renewed Spirit filled communities that show love, envision and practice shalom, promote and engage food security, care for creation and seek justice not only within our faith communities but outside of them. Acts 2:45 states: "They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

May we too find new and renewed ways to carry out this same calling today. The Holy Spirit invites us to new things, possibilities and hope and brings us into communities where justice, peace and love abound. Let us this Pentecost invite the Spirit to transform us so that we can be more like Jesus.

Let us pray

O God, we confess we have not done all that we can do to invite new and renewed communities of shalom inspired by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Forgive us and help us to fully receive the power and grace the Holy Spirit has for our lives in community and for the integrity of God's creation.

Help us to see and live into a renewed vision of shalom that models the oneness experienced at Pentecost locally, nationally, and globally.

We pray for a transgenerational revival that reconciles and restores us with repaired communities that have been broken.

Teach us and lead us anew to be filled with a holy awe of You that can lead and inspire us to be messengers and agents of your signs and wonders.

Amen.

Presidents of the World Council of Churches

– WCC News

People's Reporter
A FORUM OF CURRENT AFFAIRS

New labour codes to reverse human progress !

The Industrial Revolution that started in England during the middle of the 18th century helped to increase the production of material wealth there. However, this was achieved by extracting the blood and sweat of workers through forcing them to work for very long hours, at extremely low wages in insanitary working conditions, and by enslaving women and children, and rejecting employment to adult males. Therefore, the production of wealth was achieved terribly crippling the life of workers. A few enlightened people deeply disturbed by that situation of workers and its social and moral impacts in the society, strongly pressed the demand for protecting the rights of workers. The Factory Movement during the 1830s under the leadership of these social reformers forced the government to introduce labour legislations that fixed the minimum age of child workers and maximum hours of work, minimum wage, sanitary facilities in the factories, compensation for death and injury during work, and many such rights of the workers. While the Industrial Revolution contributed to the economic development, the labour legislations ensured social development and human progress.

Since then, people and governments across the world recognised that human progress can be ensured only through protecting the rights of workers. It was also recognised that the measures to improve the health and the welfare of workers were not mere acts of charity to them; but also acts of improving the productive power of the society, and of building a healthy society. It is by realising this, all governments from the middle of the 20th century accepted the welfare of the people as the goal of States and upheld the labour legislations as tools of building welfare states.

But, unfortunately, from the end of the 20th century, all states that introduced New Economic Policy passed legislations either withdrawing or reducing the rights of workers, with a view to raise the rate of profit. Even before this, the industrialists have been framing out their activities to micro and small enterprises, not covered under labour legislations. As a result, In India, over 90% of industrial workers have been working in micro and small enterprises not bound by labour legislations. Since the introduction of the New Economic Policy in India in 1991, the numbers of micro, small and medium enterprises increased further. During 2023-24, in India there were 630.25 lakh micro, 3.31 lakh small and 50,000 medium enterprises. 97% of industrial workers are employed in these enterprises. While 630.25 lakh workers in micro units do not enjoy any labour rights, 3.31 lakh workers in small enterprises enjoy only a few labour rights.

One must be disturbed by the fact that it is to take away the few rights of workers in the small and medium enterprises, rejecting the objections of trade unions, the Government of India announced the New Labour Codes in November 2025. The Trade Unions in the country jointly organised a hartal to express their protest against this in March 2026. The new rules will replace 29 labour laws that have been governing provisions regarding wages, social security, working hours, retirement benefits and trade union rights. The new Labour codes and rules are bound to cripple the lives of workers terribly. What is unfortunate is that the middle class people apart from being unconcerned about this humanitarian problem, also ignore the fact that the more hardship in the lives of workers would promote social impacts with threats to their lives also.

Thought for the Fortnight

"We need to support new organizing strategies for employees who too often have never had the benefit of collective bargaining, and we have to resist the assault on workers' rights."

– Hillary Clinton

70th Anniversary of the CISRS

A Strategic Reorientation on the Horizon

As we reflect on the 70 years of the life and witness of the CISRS, we affirm its unwavering commitment to transformative faith and action, inspiring various faith communities and secular groups in favor of the marginalized and the disenfranchised.

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around theology in various parts of India. **One significant discussion took place in Kerala in 1943, where M. M. Thomas presented a paper titled "Social Manifesto of the Church." This paper greatly influenced conversations about the church's role in promoting social justice, both in India and on international platforms like the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA).** The notion of a church's active engagement in societal issues, as envisioned by Thomas, paved the way for collaborative efforts among Christian leaders in India. Alongside his contemporaries—Russell Chandran, E.V. Mathew, and P.D. Devanandan—he recognized the necessity of nurturing **Christian social thought and took the significant step of establishing the Christian Institute for the Study of Society (CISS) in 1953. In 1957, this initiative evolved into CISRS, incorporating an essential focus on the study of religion. P. D. Devanandan served as the inaugural director of the institution.**

With a clear vision of identifying "Christian participation in nation-building," CISRS embarked on a mission to empower Indian faith communities in navigating the challenges of a post-Independence and post-missionary landscape. Its understanding of nationalism extended beyond mere opposition to colonialism; it embraced the idea of nurturing a just, inclusive, and wider community that actively resists fragmentation and social injustice from within. Inspired by the philosophical legacies of Indian thinkers such as Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rammanohar Lohiya and B. R. Ambedkar, as well as radical anti-Brahminic movements in Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, the CISRS championed an inclusive form of nationalism that emphasized multiplicity rather than homogeneity in terms of culture, religion, and social existence.

The Rev. Dr. Y. T. Vinayaraj is the Director of the CISRS

Recognizing the importance of interfaith dialogue, particularly in engaging with Renaissance Hinduism, CISRS initiated discussions and programs aimed at fostering mutual understanding among various religious communities in India and there by contributing to the building of a community based on justice and love. In fact, this marked the beginning of Indian Christian Theology that envisaged volumes such as *Unknown Christ of Hinduism* (Raimon Panikkar, 1964), *Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance* (M.M. Thomas, 1970), and *Preparation for Dialogue* (P.D. Devanandan, 1964), reflecting on Christ from Indian cultural traditions.[1] This interfaith theological approach soon expanded beyond the Institute and became a significant program within the broader framework of the WCC.

Under the stewardship of visionary leaders such as M.M. Thomas and P. D. Devanandan, CISRS played a crucial role in shaping the global discourse around ecumenical social thought, which envisaged churches' collective involvement in building a responsible society in response to the study of WCC Commission on Church and Society and the Vatican Council II (1962-65). The landmark WCC Conference held in New Delhi in 1961 underscored the need for churches to contribute to the development of a responsible society.[2] This focus inspired churches across India and Asia to engage actively in socio-political movements that champion justice for marginalized and vulnerable communities.

In the face of socio-political challenges, such as the political Emergency declared by Indira Gandhi from 1975 to 1977 in India, CISRS became a prominent voice by mobilizing support for vulnerable communities who happened to be the victims of the government's social, political, and economic policies. CISRS courageously critiqued the economic and political policies in place that failed to protect or empower the weaker sections of society.[3] **The powerful slogan "from evangelization to social action," introduced by CISRS, galvanized the formation of Christian action groups, leading to heightened participation in socio-political struggles aimed at defending the rights of marginalized communities. As we reflect on the 70 years of the life and witness of the CISRS, we affirm its unwavering commitment to transformative faith and action, inspiring various faith communities and secular groups in favor of the marginalized and the disenfranchised.**

Since the 1990s, CISRS has facilitated engaging discussions and thoughtful deliberations aimed at challenging the monolithic and often authoritarian developmental policies dictated by the state. This initiative has positioned the CISRS as a steadfast ally of marginalized communities in the country. Under the leadership of Saral K. Chatterji, who succeeded M. M. Thomas in 1976, the organization advocated distinctly Christian Social Action and Indian contextual Theologies. These included Dalit Theology, Tribal theology, and Womanist theology, which were inspired by the principles of liberation theology in Latin America and Black Theology in North America. This effort reflected a deep commitment to addressing the lived experiences and theological reflections of diverse and often overlooked communities in India.

Since the beginning, CISRS placed strong emphasis on organizing seminars and workshops, collecting reports, and publishing them for the benefit of churches and the theological

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From Inclusion To Belongingness

Vinod Victor

The paradigm shifts together point toward a renewed ecclesiology in which the Church in Europe, especially within the Anglican Communion, embodies a living and dynamic expression of God's inclusive kingdom. The movement from access to ownership, presence to participation, and tolerance to mutual transformation reflects a deeper call to become a community shaped not by hierarchy or uniformity but by shared life in Christ. This vision resonates strongly with the image of the Church in First Corinthians 12, where the Body of Christ is described as having many members, each indispensable and honored.

Do you experience a genuine sense of belonging within your church community, where your identity, voice, and presence are truly valued, or do you find yourself merely included as part of a well intentioned effort to appear diverse? This question invites a deeper reflection on the difference between belongingness and the more commonly used idea of inclusion, challenging us to consider whether the Church is simply making token spaces for people or actually becoming a shared life in which all are recognized as integral to its being and mission.

Belongingness refers to a deep sense of being accepted, valued, and recognized as an integral part of a community. It goes beyond mere presence or membership, touching on identity, dignity, and relational connectedness. When people experience belongingness, they feel that who they are, is welcomed and that they have a meaningful place within the life, decision-making, and future of the community.

Inclusion, by contrast, is the practice or process of ensuring that diverse individuals are invited, present, and able to participate. Inclusion can exist without full belongingness, if people are present but not truly heard, valued, or empowered. **In this sense, inclusion is often a step toward belongingness, but belongingness is deeper, involving mutual recognition, shared ownership, and emotional and spiritual rootedness within the community.**

Access to Ownership

In the European Anglican ecclesial context shaped by migration, the shift from access to ownership calls the Church to move beyond simply allowing people from diverse backgrounds to enter its spaces. It challenges structures where leadership, theology, and decision-making remain controlled by historically dominant groups. Ownership implies that migrant and minority communities are co-creators of the Church's life, shaping liturgy, governance, and mission. This reflects a theological commitment to the Body of Christ as shared rather than administered.

Presence to Participation

The shift from presence to participation recognizes that simply having diverse congregants in pews is not enough. **Participation involves active engagement in worship, leadership, and theological reflection.** In Anglican churches across Europe, this means enabling diasporic communities to bring their voices, languages, and spiritual expressions into the center rather than the margins. **Participation transforms the Church into a living communion rather than a passive gathering.**

Tolerance to Mutual Transformation

Tolerance often implies enduring difference without genuine engagement. The shift toward mutual transformation invites deeper encounter where all parties are open to being changed. In a global Anglican presence in Europe, this means that historic congregations and newer migrant communities learn from one another, reshaping theology, worship, and identity together. It reflects a dynamic understanding of communion where the Spirit works through diversity to renew the Church.

Assimilation to Decolonial Affirmations

Assimilation expects newcomers to conform to dominant cultural norms. Decolonial affirmations resist this by valuing and affirming the identities, histories, and spiritualities of previously marginalized communities. In ecclesiology, this gently challenges Eurocentric expressions of Anglicanism and

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makes space for multiple theological voices. It acknowledges the colonial histories embedded in church structures and seeks to dismantle them through justice-oriented practices.

Monoculture to a Kaleidoscope of Cultures

The move from monoculture to a kaleidoscope of cultures reflects the visible diversity within Anglican congregations in Europe today. **Rather than maintaining a single cultural expression of church life, this paradigm embraces a dynamic interplay of traditions, languages, and practices. The Church becomes a space where diversity is not managed but celebrated as a sign of God's expansive creativity and the global nature of the Anglican Communion. Even Costumes, Cuisines and Cultural expressions become part of this celebration.**

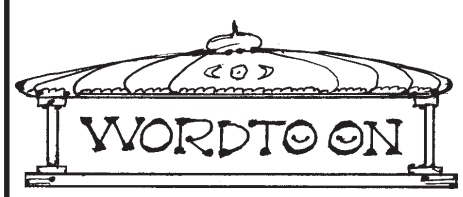
Cultural Sensitivity to Cultural Humility

Cultural sensitivity involves awareness of, and respect for, differences, but cultural humility goes further by recognizing one's own limitations and being open to learning from others. In ecclesial life, this means leaders and communities do not assume expertise over others' experiences but engage in ongoing self-reflection and listening. **Cultural humility fosters relationships of equality and deepens authentic communion across cultural boundaries.**

Paternalism to Redistribution of Power

Paternalism maintains hierarchical relationships where some groups guide or control others. The shift to redistribution of power calls for structural change where authority and leadership are shared. In the Anglican Church in Europe, this means elevating voices from migrant and minority communities into positions of influence and decision-making. **It reflects a commitment to justice and a reimagining of leadership as collaborative rather than top-down.**

In the European Anglican ecclesial context shaped by migration, the shift from access to ownership calls the Church to move beyond simply allowing people from diverse backgrounds to enter its spaces. It challenges structures where leadership, theology, and decision-making remain controlled by historically dominant groups. Ownership implies that migrant and minority communities are co-creators of the Church's life, shaping liturgy, governance, and mission. This reflects a theological commitment to the Body of Christ as shared rather than administered.



Indeed, its PRICE, SIR, is a SURPRISE!

Comfort to Constructive Discomfort

Churches often gravitate toward familiar practices that provide comfort. The move toward constructive discomfort invites communities to embrace challenges that come with diversity and change. This includes rethinking liturgy, confronting biases, and addressing systemic inequalities. Constructive discomfort becomes a space where growth, repentance, and renewal occur within the Body of Christ.

Avoiding Conflict to Engaging Creatively in Mitigation of Conflict

Avoiding conflict can suppress important differences and tensions. **The shift toward creative engagement recognizes conflict as an opportunity for deeper understanding and transformation.** In a diverse Anglican context, this involves developing practices of dialogue, reconciliation, and shared problem-solving. **Engaging conflict faithfully allows the Church to embody reconciliation and witness to unity in diversity.**

Conclusion

These paradigm shifts together point toward a renewed ecclesiology in which the Church in Europe, especially within the Anglican Communion, embodies a living and dynamic expression of God's inclusive kingdom. The movement from access to ownership, presence to participation, and tolerance to mutual transformation reflects a deeper call to become a community shaped not by hierarchy or uniformity but by shared life in Christ. This vision resonates strongly with the image of the Church in First Corinthians 12, where the Body of Christ is described as having many members, each indispensable and honored. Likewise, the vision in Revelation 7:9 portrays a multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language standing together before God, not erased into sameness but united in worship.

These biblical insights affirm that true belonging in the Church is rooted in God's reconciling work, where diversity is not a challenge to overcome but a gift through which the fullness of Christ is revealed.

Climate and Biodiversity - 5

How the Loss of Vultures Endangered Human Health

Mathew Koshy

**This story reveals a fundamental principle of ecology.
No species exists in isolation. Each one plays a role within a complex web of life.
When one element is removed, the effects extend far beyond what we initially imagine.
The vulture was never a creature to be feared or despised.
It was a necessary participant in the balance of life.**

For generations, the vulture has been one of the most misunderstood creatures on earth. It has often been seen as ugly, unclean, and even culturally stigmatised. Stories have portrayed it as a symbol of death, and people have instinctively turned away from it with dislike. Children grow up hearing such images, and without ever understanding their role, they learn to reject the bird.

Yet, this perception hides a deeper truth. The decline of vultures has led not only to ecological imbalance but also to serious public health crises, revealing their essential role in both nature and human life.

For centuries, vultures — especially the Indian vulture — played a silent but crucial role in maintaining ecological balance. They fed on the carcasses of dead animals and removed them rapidly from the environment. What might otherwise have slowly decayed, spreading foul odour and disease, was consumed within hours. Their highly acidic digestive system — one of the strongest in the animal kingdom — enabled them to destroy dangerous pathogens such as anthrax and rabies-causing organisms. In this quiet and unseen way, vultures acted as natural sanitizers, protecting both ecosystems and human health.

This balance remained intact until human interventions disrupted it

In the 1990s, scientists and wildlife researchers began to observe a sudden and alarming decline in vulture populations across India. Investigations revealed a surprising cause: a commonly used veterinary drug called diclofenac. Widely administered to cattle for pain relief, this drug is safe for humans. However, environmental studies later confirmed that it is highly toxic to vultures.

When cattle treated with diclofenac died, residues of the drug remained in their tissues. Vultures, continuing their ecological role, fed on these carcasses. Unlike humans, vultures lack the metabolic pathway needed to break down diclofenac. Even small quantities caused kidney failure, leading to the accumulation of toxic crystals in their organs. Within days, the birds died.

Because vultures feed in groups, a single contaminated carcass could kill dozens of birds at once. At the same time, vultures reproduce slowly—often raising only one chick per year. As a result, their population could not recover from these rapid losses.

What followed was an unexpected chain reaction

Within a decade, vulture populations in India declined by more than 95 percent — a fact widely documented by conservation scientists and later acknowledged through government action, including restrictions on veterinary diclofenac.

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Dr. Mathew Koshy Punnackadu is the Project Director of the CSI Community Development Programme
And the Exceutive Editor of
the International Journal of Climate Justice.

At first, this disappearance did not appear alarming. However, the effects did not remain confined to wildlife.

Without vultures, carcasses remained exposed for longer periods. This created ideal conditions for bacterial growth and disease spread. The natural system of rapid disposal had collapsed.

Into this ecological gap stepped another species — stray dogs.With increased access to food from carcasses and unmanaged waste, stray dog populations expanded rapidly. Unlike vultures, dogs are inefficient scavengers. They consume slowly, leave behind remains, and can transmit diseases. Their closer interaction with human settlements led to a sharp increase in dog bites.

Consequently, cases of rabies — a fatal but preventable disease — rose significantly. India today bears one of the highest burdens of rabies in the world. **According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), India reports about 18,000 to 20,000 rabies deaths annually out of the estimated 59,000 deaths worldwide. An estimated 17.4 million animal bites occur in India each year, with 96–97% of human rabies cases being dog-mediated. Environmental and public health studies have increasingly linked this crisis, in part, to the ecological imbalance caused by the decline of vultures.**

The irony is striking. A bird once rejected for feeding on the dead had been quietly protecting life. When it disappeared, death did not; it lingered and spread.

This story reveals a fundamental principle of ecology: no species exists in isolation. Each one plays a role within a complex web of life. When one element is removed, the effects extend far beyond what we initially imagine. The vulture was never a creature to be feared or despised. It was a necessary participant in the balance of life.

At the same time, this crisis also teaches practical lessons. The unregulated use of veterinary drugs, lack of ecological awareness in policy decisions, and failure to understand interdependence all contributed to this problem. **Human well-being is inseparable from ecological health.**

Yet, there is also reason for hope. Recognising the danger, governments have restricted the veterinary use of diclofenac, and conservation organisations have initiated vulture breeding and protection programs. Awareness about the ecological importance of vultures is gradually increasing. These efforts show that while damage has been done, restoration is still possible.

The lesson is clear: we must learn to respect every form of life — not based on appearance or prejudice, but on its role within the larger order of creation. For when even a single species disappears, it is not only that life which is lost — the balance of the whole is disturbed. ●

70th Anniversary of the CISRS

A Strategic Reorientation on the Horizon

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academia. However, the emphasis on social action in the 1980s signified a pivotal transformation in its publishing ministry, evolving from a narrow approach centered on interfaith dialogue to a broader engagement with inter-ideological discourse. This marked a turning point in Indian Christian Theology—one that moved away from elitist perspectives and listened to the voices from the margins. CISRS' journal *Religion & Society* and its newsletter, *The New Guardian,* manifest those engagements. Under the leadership of Godwin Shiri and Vincent Rajkumar, successors to Chatterji, the organization endeavored to put the vision of justice into action, embedding the commitment to marginalized communities in its programmatic activities.

However, the rise of neo-liberal capitalist economy, politics, and culture that necessitated newer ideological and theological engagements and frameworks, demands a further reorientation of the Christian ethical social thought today. It demands a significant reorientation—from a focus on human empowerment to a deeper examination of the socio-political agency of the marginalized. It is an ideological/theoretical realization to acknowledge and accept the desire of the marginalized to re-present themselves rather than be represented. In addition to this, the growing ecological crisis and its impact on ecological systems and the communities that depend on them necessitate another paradigm shift: one that transitions from merely implementing solidarity programs to developing thought patterns and practices fostering planetary communities that admit the agency of the earth and earth communities. There is a pressing demand to translate Thomas' theology of humanisation to planetarity, a theological movement from liberation theology toward a more encompassing political theology of common belonging.[4]

In today's context, marked by neoliberalism, neofascism, and neo-Zionism, there is an urgent need to develop a radical post secular political thought and theology. This approach should explore different religions as ethical frameworks that shape individual and communitarian identities, contributing to the creation of a respectful society. The current perception of secularism,which promotes religious neutrality and treats religion as a private matter—often viewing it as a potential source of communalism and terrorism—challenges faith-based organizations like CISRS to affirm the ethical potential of various religions, especially in the emerging context of Islamophobia, Zionism, and Hindutva. Furthermore, the transformation of the welfare state into a totalitarian state, which exercises sovereign power over its citizens, calls for innovative post-nationist and postsecular democratic-political practices that challenge majoritarianism and political exclusivism.

Although the path forward is fraught with challenges and obstacles, there is a collective determination to advance toward realizing the vision established by the pioneers of the CISRS. This vision emphasizes the renewal of Christian commitment, aimed at fostering a transformative community grounded in justice, respect, and love—qualities that energize and activate its faithful members. The CISRS remains dedicated to this journey, bolstered by the collaboration of sister ecumenical organizations in India and abroad, various faith communities including the churches, and theological academia.

CISRS also gratefully acknowledges the support of public friends and institutions from outside church circles. These partnerships are vital in promoting a public witness, contributing to a more open, dialogical, and communitarian approach in its mission. Through these collaborative efforts, the CISRS aims to enrich its life and witness in a manner that is inclusive and transformative for all involved.

Footnotes

[1] M.M. Thomas defines Indian Christian Theology as the response of Indian Christian faith communities to Christ and his saving action throughout history and culture. See, M.M. Thomas and P.T. Thomas, The Pioneers of Indian Christian Theology (Thiruvalla: CLS, 1990).

[2] The section of the Assembly report on "Christian Responsibility in Political Action," prepared by M.M. Thomas, remains one of the enduring statements on the Christian approach to "nation building." See Paul Abrecht, "Some Reflections on Ecumenical Social Thought—Then and Now," in Christian Witness in Society, ed. K.C. Abraham (Bangalore: BTE-SSC, 1998), 32-49.

[3] In 1979, the responses of M.M. Thomas to the Emergency were published by his disciples and supporters. These were later reprinted by CISRS in 2022; M.M. Thomas, Response to Tyranny: Writings Between July 1975 and February 1977 (Delhi: ISPCK, 2022).

[4] For more details, see Religion & Society, Vol. 72, No. 2 (April 2026). ●

Burning Issues of Today's World: An Overview

V. Mathew Kurian

The US–Iran war has triggered a global economic crisis especially by hiking oil prices surpassing $120 per barrel and a 30% surge in gasoline prices. It has almost paralysed the normal functioning of the global economy. The tragedy of the present global scenario is that there is no powerful agency or accountable international agency to catalyse peace efforts.

I. Introduction

The world is currently in a multidimensional crisis. A number of interconnected issues pose grave challenges to the meaningful survival of global humanity. These issues include geo-political conflicts, declining democratic institutions, slowdown in the global economy, swelling unemployment, widening inequality, galloping inflation and deepening environmental threat. In this paper, we intend to give a brief overview of these issues.

II. Geo-Political Conflicts as a Threat to World Humanity

The world is presently under the threat of two major wars: the Russia–Ukraine war and the US/ Israel–Iran war. Apart from these wars, there are multiple conflicts of various degrees which are going on, in different parts of the world, causing great concern to global humanity. There are people who fear that we are on the verge of a Third World War.

Let us first have a look into the ongoing Russia–Ukraine war. This war started in February 2022. So the war is, now, in its fourth year. It has, already, inflicted severe damages to both countries in terms of life lost, injured humans and huge material loss. **According to the Office of the High Commission on Human Rights (OHCHR), by 31, January 2026, there were 56,550 casualties in Ukraine. Since 24 February 2022, 15,172 were killed and 41,378 injured. The real numbers may be more than these.**

A January 2026 report of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) reveals that Russia has suffered approximately 1.2 million casualties including killed, wounded and missing. According to the CSIS report, "These numbers are extraordinary. No major power has suffered anywhere near these numbers of casualties or fatalities in any war since World War II."

Ukraine has also lost about a quarter of its pre-war population of 42 million in addition to the casualties. About 5 million are forced to live in Russian occupied territory and 5.9 million Ukrainians left the country.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) observes that the military spending of Russia consistently increased since the beginning of the war. In 2021, the spending was only $66 bn. But in 2022, it jumped to $102 bn, in 2023 to $109 bn and in 2024 surged to $149 bn and in 2025 it reached $190 bn. The escalation trend of military expenditure is visible in 2026 also.

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According to SIPRI, Ukraine's war expenditure also has increased from $ 6.9 bn in 2021 to $ 41 bn in 2022, $ 65 bn in 2023 and 2024. Its 2025 defence budget was raised to $71 bn. Three-fourths have been funded by Europe. Trump withdrew 99% of the US support.

Now, let us turn to the ongoing US–Iran war and its global implications. On February 28, US unleashed a war on Iran. American President Donald Trump termed it as "Operation Epic Fury". **US cited the primary reason for the war as Iran's nuclear programme. The February 28 military intervention of US in Iran killed the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and many top leaders. It also killed a number of civilians including 168 school girls.**

Iran did not surrender to the US aggression. Ali Khamenei's second son Mojtaba Khamenei succeeded his father. Iran countered the US–Israel attacks by targeting US military establishments in the GCC countries and Israel. It also blocked the Strait of Hormuz through which 20 percent of global oil used to pass through.

The war also escalated the military spending of all the affected countries. As of April/May 2026, the Pentagon estimates an amount of $29 bn as direct US war costs. According to SIPRI data through early 2026, Iran's official military spending has risen sharply, exceeding $10 bn annually by 2023. A significant increase in the military budget of Israel also can be seen. The military budget of Israel jumped to 97% ($48.3 bn) compared to 2022. The current strain compelled Israel to hike the military budget much more.

The US–Iran war has triggered a global economic crisis especially by hiking oil prices surpassing $120 per barrel and a 30% surge in gasoline prices. It has almost paralysed the normal functioning of the global economy. The tragedy of the present global scenario is that there is no powerful agency or accountable international agency to catalyse peace efforts.

Besides these two wars, there are also a number of regional and local conflicts causing great concern to global humanity. For example, US under Donald Trump captured the President of Venezuela and his family. This is a clear case of undermining international law. Some other cases are Afghanistan under Taliban control, Rohingya Refugee Crisis and the like.

All these geo-political tensions compel global consciousness to get aroused for constituting a powerful and accountable multilateral institution so that future global humanity can peacefully and meaningfully live in this planet Earth – our common home. ●

To be continued

'We, The People of India'

>>> Contd. from Page 8 Col. 4

There is urgency to construct collective nature within the Church as Christian minority belongs to the heritage of 'We, the People of India'. Therefore belongs to the heritage of experiencing fraternity, equality and freedom. Let us learn to invest into the idea and heritage of the Preamble of the Indian Constitution which starts with affirmation and paves the way forward for allowing our collective memory and imagination to expand.

lawyers and judiciary, universities, women organisations and different civil society bodies in West Bengal? In what ways does the rest of 'We, the People of India' are in solidarity with the collective in West Bengal masses? How the same can be related with democratic collective initiatives elsewhere in Asia and across the globe. This brief article is inadequate for a detailed exploration into every initiative in terms of collective responses from different democratic institutions and civil society organisations.

A perspective on the issue of democracy in decline from the Christin minorities in India who are part of WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, is mostly institutions driven. The Church owns a number of educational institutions from primary schools to professional institutions. The Church owns huge tracks of landed property across India. The Church is into hospital and medical fields, and different forms of vocational and empowering projects, besides propagation of religion. Preoccupation with the Church run institutions compels the Church to safeguard its institutions and land with the support of the respective governments. The seriousness of democracy in decline is not taken serious enough as the Church retains the state of a spiritual institution. The recent Supreme Court judgement on March 24, 2026 in Chinthada Anand Vs State of Andhra Pradesh demanding applicability of SC/ ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 to the Christians of SC origin was defeated and the same was extensively published by different media houses in India. Knowing the limitations to the very fundamental right namely 'freedom of religion,' and inability on the part of the highest body of Justice which endorses 1950 Presidential Order, there is increasing violence on the Christians of SC origin as well as on Christian institutions at large. We, the People of India, are called to engage in collective imagination of fraternity, equality and freedom through constitutional means. Withdrawal from collective imagination is a loss of experiencing democracy on the part of the Church which seems to be based on minority (over) consciousness; it is reluctance to respond in theological- praxis to the ongoing crisis, and lack of imagination to invest into the collective nature of decision making, remembering and providing alternatives as needed. **The Indian Church can't afford to speak the language of dualism such as social gospel and spiritual gospel like many American Evangelists and a few Church traditions do in USA.** Sustaining dualism in proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ seems to corner congregations at the grass-roots in India into a culture of silence over violence at home, violence at work places and violence in different forms. Erring on landed property of the Church as prospectus for real estate business had been paving way for the business groups which further added to democracy in decline with money playing pivotal role both in Church as well as in nation. Further indoctrination of 'Christian Zionism' which is a failure to distinguish between the Biblical Israel and contemporary Israel nation-state weakens the Indian Church of its ability to respond creatively through Christian-Praxis amidst, democracy in decline'.

There is urgency to construct collective nature within the Church as Christian minority belongs to the heritage of 'We, the People of India'. Therefore belongs to the heritage of experiencing fraternity, equality and freedom. Let us learn to invest into the idea and heritage of the Preamble of the Indian Constitution which starts with affirmation and paves the way forward for allowing our collective memory and imagination to expand.

Footnotes

[1] Quraishi S.Y. Democracy's Heartland: Inside the Battle for Power in South Asia (New Delhi: Juggernut Books, 2025), 422. ●

Young People's Column

The Role of Youth in India in Nation Building Amidst Interfaith Realities

K. Sunny Pradeep

If we walk into a college campus, a tea stall, a church youth fellowship, or even scroll through social media and ask young people, *"What is your role in nation building?"* we will often hear two kinds of responses.

One group responds confidently: "I study well, work hard, pay taxes, and contribute to India's economy. That itself is nation building."

Another group responds with frustration or distance:"What can one person like me really do? First the nation should give me opportunities, jobs, and security."

And surprisingly, some young people may even ask: "What exactly is nation building?"

These responses reveal not only confusion, but a deeper crisis of imagination. *Nation building is often reduced either to economic productivity or to the responsibility of the governments and the politicians.* In a country like India, where religions, languages, cultures, castes, and identities coexist in both beauty and tension, nation building is not merely a political project. It is an ethical and relational vocation.

What is Nation Building? **Nation building refers to the process of constructing or structuring a national identity using the power of the state and the participation of its people to promote unity, development, stability, and collective progress.**

Nation Building Beyond GDP: One of the greatest misunderstandings among modern youth, is reducing nation building merely to economic growth. For many, a strong nation means better salaries, technological advancement, rising GDP, global recognition, and modern infrastructure. While these are undeniably important, they alone cannot sustain a nation. **A country may grow economically and yet decline socially, morally, and relationally.**

Political thinker and economist Amartya Sen reminds us that development must be understood not simply as economic expansion but as the enlargement of human freedom, dignity, and social capability. This means nation building is not only about constructing highways and digital systems, but also about building trust, cooperation, and mutual respect among citizens.

In the Indian context, this becomes even more significant. India is not a uniform society built upon a single language, religion, or culture. It is a civilization shaped by immense plurality. Therefore, nation building in India cannot be measured only through economic indicators. It must also be evaluated through communal harmony, social justice, ethical citizenship, inclusion of minorities, dignity of the marginalized, and peaceful coexistence among diverse communities.

Youth as Bridge-Builders in Interfaith Spaces: Young people are not merely future citizens waiting for responsibility to arrive later in life; they are already shaping the social atmosphere of the nation through their conversations, choices, relationships, and digital presence.

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Unlike the previous generations, today's youth encounter religious diversity more directly and frequently. **These encounters can either become opportunities for understanding or grounds for prejudice.**

Interfaith bridge-building begins not through grand political movements, but through ordinary human encounters. It begins when young people listen before judging, refuse stereotypes, defend the dignity of others, engage in honest conversations, and cooperate across religious boundaries for the common good.

Interfaith engagement should not be reduced to symbolic events or occasional celebrations. It must become a lived ethic expressed through shared community service, educational collaboration, neighbourhood solidarity, disaster relief efforts, environmental initiatives, and everyday respect in public life.

Pope Francis, speaking often on human fraternity, warns that societies collapse when people stop seeing one another as neighbours and begin viewing one another as threats. In a deeply plural nation like India, the task of youth is therefore profoundly ethical – to rebuild trust where suspicion grows and to cultivate hope where fear dominates.

From Tolerance to Participation: In a diverse country like India, tolerance alone is no longer enough. Many people say, "I respect all religions," yet remain distant from people of other communities. True nation building requires more than passive acceptance; it requires active participation in the life and welfare of society.

Participation means working together despite differences. When youth engage in community service, environmental campaigns, disaster relief, blood donation drives, educational support, or neighbourhood initiatives alongside people from other faiths, barriers slowly begin to break. **Shared service often creates stronger unity than political slogans.**

***Digital Youth and the Danger of Polarization*:** Today's youth live in a digital world where opinions are shaped not only by family or society, but also by algorithms, reels, forwarded messages, and online influencers. Many young people unknowingly become victims of polarization through manipulated videos, fake news, and emotionally charged content.

Therefore, responsible digital citizenship has become an important part of nation building. Youth must learn to verify information before sharing, to resist hate speech, to avoid stereo-typing communities, and to use digital spaces for awareness, dialogue, and peace.

In today's India, nation building happens not only on streets and campuses, but also on screens. **The question is whether youth will use digital platforms to divide society or to strengthen it.**

The India We Choose to Build: Nation building is not limited to politics or public institutions. It begins in everyday life – in how people speak one another, respond to differences, use social media, and participate in society. Every act of respect, dialogue, and cooperation, contributes to the moral fabric of the nation.

Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam often reminded young people that the strength of India lies in the dreams and character of its youth.The question before today's youth is, therefore, not simply, "What can the nation give me?" but rather, "What kind of nation am I helping to build?"

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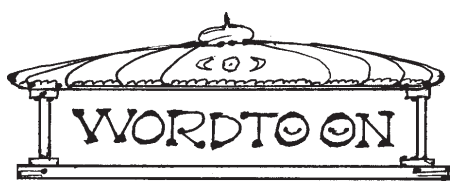

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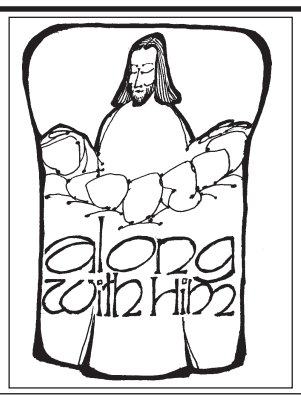

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Mammen Varkey

Post Easter Reflections - 4

The Path of the Cross will Lead to Resurrection - 4

Opposed to the Plan, Purpose and Path of the Risen Master!

"On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you". When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the father has sent me, even so I send you". And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." John 20:19-23 (RSV)

The Risen Master told the disciples who had shut themselves inside a room, "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." Having completely obeyed, and fully surrendered himself to, the will of the Parent God, and gone along the path of the cross, the Risen Master was absolutely clear what should be the way along which his disciples should travel in their mission of the establishment of the 'kingdom of God'. Now that their crucified Master stood before them with the crucified body, was an undeniable evidence that the Parent God would not have raised him up! Through the words, "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you," their Risen Master was telling his chosen disciples unequivocally that they should proclaim the Gospel, be witnesses to him, unwaveringly travelling along the path to 'Golgotha', along the path of the cross, under any circumstance, certainly not along any other path.

It was only the first step along the path of the cross

When Jesus had sent out his twelve disciples with "the power and authority over all devils and to cure diseases, to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick," Lk. 9:12, he had said, "Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, neither bread, nor money; have no tunics……." Luke 9:3. It was only their first step along the path of the cross. Because, having completed successfully the tasks assigned to them, the twelve had returned in a triumphant mood. "And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done". Luke 9:10. But the Master had known that they did need to have a deep and serious reflection on the tasks assigned to them and what they had done. It is written, "And he took them, and went aside **privately** into a desert place……" Luke 9:10.

Call to 'EARN' the marks of the nails and spear-wounds

In the course of that 'private', profound encounter with them their Master, had bluntly told them, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me". Luke. 9:23. Now, having taken up his cross and got on to the cross and then got killed, and having the Parent God raised him from the dead, with incomparable authority and power, Risen Jesus could send them out along the path of the cross. Now showing his nail-pierced hands and spear-inflicted wounds on his side, their Risen Master called the disciples to **'EARN'** the marks of the nails on their palms and the spear-wounds on their sides.

How can the Risen Lord have print of the nails in his hands?

Now, the crucial question: Did they take seriously their Risen Master's call? But before we enter into a serious reflection on that question, we need to reflect on the response of one of the disciples, who was not present when the Risen Master encountered his disciples and called them to **EARN** their marks of the nails, "But one of the twelve, called the Twin was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord". But he said unto them, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe." John 20:24, 25.

Only a Casual reading!

Generally, we casually read these verses and pass on. Very seldom, a deep deliberation on the response of Thomas to the words of the other disciples, is done. But it is very necessary. **Two points are very clear.**

Prolonged, excited interactions with Thomas

First, definitely the entry of their Crucified Master to the room where the disciples were, must have been an inexpressibly great surprise. The disciples must have been terribly excited at the bodily presence of their Crucified Master among them, and at the interactions with him. Quite naturally, those disciples must have had excited, prolonged sharing and conversations with Thomas. It is written that Jesus appeared before them again, only after 8 days! So naturally, the disciples must have had 8 days long exchanges and arguments with Thomas, as the full group, also in small groups or even individually. **Still, they could not convince him that it was their Master himself who appeared before them. It is, in a way, unbelievable.**

Secondly, from the words of Thomas, in response to the disciples' sharing of the news, "Unless I see in his hands……. I will not believe", it is obvious that the Risen One could not be one with the marks of the nails and the marks of the wounds inflicted by spear. **The Risen One must be One with crown on the head and staff in the hands! It was an expectation totally opposed to the plan, purpose and path of the Risen Master.** ●

To be continued

LAMP UNTO THE FEET, LIGHT UNTO THE PATH

Do Not Forget To Say Thanks

A. V. Itty

Lk. 17:11-19

"When one of them saw that he was healed, he came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself to the ground at Jesus' feet and thanked him. The man was a Samaritan" (vs. 15,16).

People in the foreign countries say thanks even for small things. But many people in our land do not say so, even for very important things. It is a mark of nobility to say thanks for the helps and blessings that we receive from others. We should be grateful to God for all the blessings that we receive from Him. There is no doubt that the Samaritan who has come back to thank him for healing him of his leprosy has made Jesus happy. But the other nine who were Jews, who were habitual in talking highly of their racial greatness, turned out to be ungrateful and thus caused sadness and pain to the heart of Jesus.

God wants us to live in humility and gratitude, and to consider our wealth, our capabilities, and everything else that we enjoy as gifts from God. A person who was reluctant to host a prayer meeting at his house is said to have commented: "All will come in and trample on my beautiful tiles and ruffle the cushions". How ungrateful, how arrogant, was the attitude of that person who had been raised up in a poor home and became rich by

God's grace?

The good deeds and the helps that we render to others, reveal the Godliness in us. Saying thanks for the good deeds and the helps received too, is part of that divinity. "Were not there ten who were healed? Where are the other nine? No one other than this Samaritan has come back to give thanks to God" (v.18). **This praise for the grateful man and the criticism about the others show the response of Jesus. Let us try to live in gratitude to God and other human beings, for the good that we get from them. May God help us for that.** ●

Prof. A. V. Itty, former Professor of English at Bishop Moore College, Mavelikara, is, now, engaged in the Evangelical, and Educational Ministry undertaken by ADORE in the Rayagada Dist. of Odisha. 94950 17850 (Mob)

WARD
off
WARS
before deciding
AWARDS!

Food For Thought:

Ingratitude is a sin which God hates the most!

National Federation of Churches in India (NFCI) Launched

During the Fourth National Ecumenical Bishops' Fellowship Meeting held on May 08, 2026, at St. John's National Academy of Health Sciences (SJNAHS) Bengaluru, the launching of the National Federation of Churches in India (NFCI) took place.

In the context of the Churches in India being in a critical situation facing many challenges and difficulties such as violent attacks on pastors and the faithful, stringent anti-conversion laws in some States, and the attempts to takeover Church properties through the amendments of FCRA and the proposed Christian Welfare / Property Board, the urgent need for a united front to face such issues was strongly felt. Hence the immediate launching of the National Federation of Churches in India (NFCI) became inevitable. After deliberating on its formation for the last two years and framing its Guidelines, the NFCI was formally launched after accepting and approving its Guidelines.

Participants in the Inaugural Function of The National Federation of Churches in India

The main purpose of the NFCI is to be a national ecumenical body of Churches, an umbrella organisation and apex body of Christ's disciples in India. It will represent the Churches by presenting a united face of Christianity and serving as the single voice of the Christian Community to the Nation. It will facilitate collaboration and usher in visible unity among the member Churches while respecting their individual identities, traditions and structures. It will take up the matters of common concern of the Churches and the Christian Community in India.

The formation of the NFCI is a significant step towards Christian unity, a milestone in the ecumenical journey, and a new chapter in the fraternity and solidarity of the Churches in India.

Reported by Fr. Dr. Anthoniraj Thumma,

National Secretary, CBCI Office for Dialogue and Desk for Ecumenism, CBCI Centre, New Delhi – 09-06-2026.

Ecumenical Christian Centre

School of Politics 2026

The Ecumenical Christian Centre (ECC), Bangalore conducted a four-day Certificate Course on Constitutional Literacy at its campus from 12 to 15 May 2026. The main objective was to enable the participants to understand the Indian Constitution — what it says, how it shapes our democracy, and what each of us can do as citizens. There were participants from Jharkhand, Nagaland, Manipur, Assam, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala.

During the inaugural session, Rev. Dr. Reji Samuel, ECC Co-ordinator, welcomed the gathering and spoke on the objectives of the School of Politics. Very Rev. Dr. Sham P. Thomas, Director of the ECC, inaugurated the course. Mr. P. Joy Oommen, a retired IAS officer, in his key-note address spoke about governance and ethical leadership. He emphatically said, "Politics isn't just about power—it's about serving society and making things better". Dr. Assim Siddiqui from Ashim Premji University, Adv. Jeena V. Chacko, Adv. Feba Nisha, Dr. Sarasu Thomas, Rev. Dr. Y. Moses, Mrs. Cynthiya Stephen, Mr. Manohar Ranganathan, Adv. Sampreetha, Mr. John Thomas K., Adv. Robin Christopher and Ms. Sana Suman presented papers in various sessions.

School of Politics 2026 - Resource Persons and Participants

All the participants left with a stronger sense that ethical leadership, social justice, and active citizenship are not ideals — they are things we have to live out. ***– ECC News***

cheerchat

"Happiness is
when
what you think
what you say
and
what you do
are in Harmony"

– Mahatma Gandhi

'We, The People of India'

Praveen P. S. Perumalla

We, the People of India, are called to engage in collective imagination of fraternity, equality and freedom through constitutional means.

"…democracy is not only a form of governance, but a form of collective memory and imagination." [1]S.Y. Quraishi

West Bengal State Legislative Assembly elections held in the month of May 2026 reveals deprivation of lakhs and lakhs of citizens of their right to vote. Technology designed for the purpose of screening (eliminating) is instrumental. It is part of the SIR (Special Intensive Revision) data collection by the Election Commission of India, before the respective state elections.

Similar exercise has started in my home State of Telangana. The enumerators are asking for link documents in order to establish 'citizenship': hitherto unknown burden on the shoulders of the citizens to prove their citizenship. One pertinent issue is respective governments did not maintain consistency in providing required documents to its citizens from time to time. There are incomplete names, spelling mistakes, incorrect names but correct photograph, incorrect photography but appropriate name, etc. Few WhatsApp videos are designed to simplify the complexity involved in creating link document. If the solution is so simple why did lakhs and lakhs of citizens' rights are denied in Assam and West Bengal State Elections. Moreover, the Election Commission of India seems to be non-committal to protect citizen rights, which is evident with the Supreme Court of India directives to the Election Commission with regard to the West Bengal State Elections, asking to produce reasons for eliminating each person from the voter list and to publish the same widely.

In such a background of 'Democracy in Decline' S.Y. Quraishi, former Chief Election Commissioner, draws our attention to collective nature of democracy, not of an exclusively technically

Rev. Dr. Praveen P.S. Perumalla, is a Presbyter in the Diocese of Karimnagar of the Church of South India

driven democracy. What I infer is, 'We, the People of India' is not about we, the caste people, we, 'the rich and affluent'; we, 'the majority'; we, 'belonging to the dominant religion', etc, categories of segregation and domination. 'We, the People of India', in itself are a collective in nature; together they remember the past struggles, aspirations and the same is nurtured by collective imagination of experiencing democracy; appropriates the fruits of democracy through the services of democratic institutions. Similar can also apply to the geopolitical context globally. In response to the heavy shelling on Palestine, it is said that 'we don't want your democratic bombs,' ridiculing decline of democracy and an empire of war- economy.

Different forms of responses to 'Democracy in Decline' from within are not based on reactionary measures. It is necessarily based on affirming fullness in regional or national as well as global solidity in the use of the words 'We, the People'. The Preamble of the Indian Constitution starts with the same words 'WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA'.

Locating democracy in the collective memory and imagination of 'We, the People of India', the discussion should lead into investing into collective nature of democracy by the respective governments, youth organisations, media and journalists, lawyers and judiciary, women movements, labour unions including un-organised sector, and others. The Election Commission preparations in West Bengal had raised many questions within me. Looking at the intensity of removing voter names from the list, I expressed inhibitions with my companion in pursuit of democracy. His response was questioning the very inactive nature of the collective – We, the People of India. What are the responses from '*vidyavanthulu*' (in Telugu language meaning intellectuals) namely youth organisations, media, journalists,

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A FORUM OF CURRENT AFFAIRS

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